

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 9, 10, 16 and 18-28 are pending. By this Amendment, claims 1, 5, 6, 13-15 and 17 are cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer, claims 9 and 10 are amended, and new claims 18-28 are presented. Support for the amendments to claims 9 and 10 and new claims 18-28 can be found, for example, in the present specification at paragraphs [0022], [0023], [0028], [0029], [0042] and [0058], and in previously presented claims 9 and 10. No new matter is added. In view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks, reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §112, First Paragraph

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 9, 10, 14 and 16 under the written description requirement of 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph. By this Amendment, claims 1 and 14 are cancelled, rendering the rejection moot as to those claims. As to the remaining claims, Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

The Office Action asserts that claim 9 is not adequately supported by the specification as filed as pertains to the recitation that an acid or a salt thereof has a particular pH. By this Amendment, claim 9 is amended to recite "adding an acid or a salt thereof to the sample to obtain a solution having a pH of 4 or less." Applicants submit that such amendment obviates the rejection.

Claims 10 and 16 are rejected solely for their dependency from claim 9.

For the foregoing reasons, claims 9, 10 and 16 are fully supported by the specification as filed. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §112, Second Paragraph

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 9, 10, 14 and 16 as indefinite under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. By this Amendment, claims 1 and 14 are cancelled, rendering the rejection moot as to those claims. As to the remaining claims, Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

The Office Action asserts that claim 9 is indefinite for reciting that an acid or a salt thereof has a particular pH. By this Amendment, claim 9 is amended to recite "adding an acid or a salt thereof to the sample to obtain a solution having a pH of 4 or less." Applicants submit that such amendment obviates the rejection.

Claims 10 and 16 are rejected solely for their dependency from claim 9.

For the foregoing reasons, claims 9, 10 and 16 are definite. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102

A. Willner

The Office Action rejects claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 4,086,059 to Willner et al. ("Willner"). By this Amendment, claim 1 is cancelled, rendering the rejection moot.

A. Cheng

The Office Action rejects claims 1 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 6,066,505 to Cheng et al. ("Cheng"). By this Amendment, claims 1 and 14 are cancelled, rendering the rejection moot.

New Claims

By this Amendment, new claims 18-28 are presented. New claims 18-28 depend from claim 9 and, thus, are believed to be patentable for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 9.

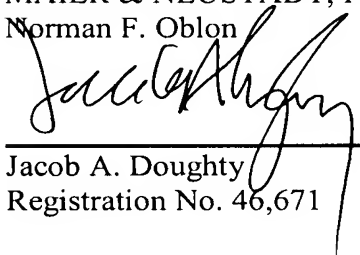
Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that claims 9, 10, 16 and 18-28 are in condition for allowance. Prompt reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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